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For more information contact:  
Rose E. Garland, (314) 539-6600, Ext. 232

## **Kim's Kids, Inc. Continues to Provide Quality Day Care**

**ST. LOUIS** – Jean McClendon is a true visionary. In 1992 she and her three daughters, Sherry Davidson, Monica Ross and Cynthia McClendon, opened Kim's Kids, Inc., in East St. Louis. It initially occupied a refurbished hardware store/fitness center. In 1995 Kim's Kids constructed a state of the art 15,000 square foot facility utilizing Tax Increment Financing, SBA funds and private lending. The business still operates out of both facilities. It is a 24 hour/seven days a week operation and services families with children aged six weeks to 12 years. Programs include pre-school, infant and toddler care and after school services.

The first location grew from 30 to 250 children while providing the quality care and programs that were lacking in the area. Seeing that there were more opportunities, Jean set out to open a second location. With the assistance of Kevin Wilson, director of the St. Louis Regional SBDC located in the St. Louis Empowerment Zone, Kim's Kids worked on a loan proposal to purchase new land and build a second location in Midtown St. Louis City. The total project costs totaled \$1.5 million. This \$1.5 million consisted of a SBA 504 loan from the St. Louis Development Corporation, bank financing and working capital from the St. Louis Minority Business Council.

Kim's Kids was named after Jean McClendon's sister Kim. Kim and Jean were planning to start and run the daycare business together. At the time Kim was a public relations specialist in Washington DC. With encouragement from her sister Jean, Kim had decided to move back to the Midwest to help get the business started. However, a tragic turn of events left Kim killed in a head-on car accident while driving from Washington D.C. Kim was only 29 years old when she died. Jean and her daughters decided to name the daycare center after Kim as a tribute to her life.

In 2003, Kim's Kids was recognized as a "Business of the Year" by Mayor Francis Slay of St. Louis City for its outstanding service to disadvantaged families and for playing an integral role in the exciting redevelopment of the Historic Grand Center area. Kim's Kids is a shining example of entrepreneurship and vision!

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